RSU Students' Perception of the English Language Learning and Needs Analysis as the Assessment Tool

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Introduction. Learning a foreign language is a complex set of intellectual activities which involves mastering both receptive and productive skills of communication. Being an interpersonal interaction, communication is by no means an impassive exchange of factual information. It is closely interwoven with the social status of its participants as well as with their emotional states. Therefore, when learning how to communicate in a foreign language, both intellectual, social, and emotional demands are imposed on students. Since the learning process exerts a substantial impact on them, students develop deep-seated beliefs about what most effective ways of learning should be employed. As well as students, university lecturers also hold strong opinions on most appropriate teaching methods. Needs analysis is performed in order to assess how students perceive the learning process, what they expect from the English course, and, as a result, to avoid the clash of conflicting views.

The aim, materials and methods. The goal of the present research is to gain a sufficient understanding of how well RSU students are motivated to do the English language course and what they expect from it, what they consider the most effective ways of learning to be, and how their opinions differ. The goal is achieved through a quantitative methodology, by distributing a pre-course questionnaire and a post-course questionnaire to the students. The students are categorised according to their proficiency levels as well as their motivation levels. Following that, their replies are compared and contrasted. A questionnaire on myths and facts in the English language teaching/learning is distributed to both students and lecturers of the Language Centre. 164 RSU students and 15 lecturers of the RSU Language Centre are surveyed.

Results. The students' replies testify to their high motivation to do the English language course. 82.3% of the students consider the course to be their priority. However, the number of the students for whom the course is of a minor importance may account for 42.1% in a group. The least motivated students are those with A and D levels, with 40% of unmotivated students.

As regards the students' opinions on the most effective methods of learning, 24.5% of them assign the highest rating to visiting English-speaking countries. Teacher-led classes are given 24.5% rating to regular school classes and 16.4% to private or evening classes. The third most popular way of language learning is reading − 15.5%. Use of multi-media is not considered to be an effective way of language learning by the students with 10.4% rating given to TV watching, 4.2% rating of Internet chatting, 4.2% rating of listening to songs, and 0.3% rating of computer games.

Conclusions. Although an overwhelming majority of the surveyed students are highly motivated, a big number of unmotivated students may sporadically occur in a single group, which significantly impedes the teaching/learning process. The needs analysis does not reveal radical differences in learning preferences of weak or strong students, as well as motivated or unmotivated ones. As to lecturers' and students' opinions, they coincide more often than not.

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